

Tennessee Department of Education
Guidelines for Transportation of Oxygen on School Buses
Effective September 1, 2009

The Tennessee Department of Education has established the following guidelines regarding the safe transportation of oxygen on a school bus:

- A. Oxygen shall be transported on school buses only when it is medically necessary. The Individualized Education Program (IEP), Section 504 Plan or Individualized Health Plan for a student must document the oxygen use and transportation requirement.
 - 1. Prior to initial transportation, and pursuant to a physician's order, school administration and transportation personnel shall be informed as to the type and size of the oxygen tank to be transported.
 - 2. Regarding a student using oxygen only on an "as needed" basis, the decision as to what is necessary is the responsibility of trained medical personnel only. This decision is not the responsibility of the bus operator or assistant.
 - 3. A determination shall be made as to who will load and unload the oxygen tank and medical support equipment. Appropriate training shall be provided for these procedures.
 - 4. When it is determined through the IEP, Section 504 or Individualized Health Plan process that a student shall be transported on a school bus accompanied by an oxygen tank and medical support equipment, it is strongly recommended that an aid/bus assistant also be assigned.
 - 5. The development of an emergency plan is required and shall cover response procedures for the bus driver and the aide in the event of a medical emergency, equipment failure, or crash. All personnel shall receive training appropriate to the plan.
 - 6. It is recommended that only one oxygen tank and medical support equipment per student be transported.
 - 7. The school system transportation department shall not assume responsibility for storing any oxygen tanks or medical support equipment.
 - 8. Changes in medical support equipment or transportation requirements shall be so noted in the IEP, Section 504 Plan or Individualized Health Plan.
 - 9. A contingency procedure shall be developed to avoid oxygen being transported without being properly secured in the event another bus must be used due to the breakdown or crash of the usual bus or if the student rides on a different bus on occasion.
- B. Prior to initial transportation, school administration and transportation personnel shall contact the manufacturer of the oxygen tank for directions on proper and safe transportation of the oxygen container and medical support equipment.

1. Oxygen shall be transported in a secure container maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
 2. Oxygen containers shall have valves and regulators that are protected against breakage.
 3. Designated school administration and/or transportation personnel shall ensure proper operation of oxygen tanks and medical support equipment on a daily basis.
 4. Manufacturer's precautions and instructions shall be followed.
- C. All oxygen containers and support equipment shall be securely attached to prevent movement and leakage. Attachment of containers shall be done in accordance with the bus manufacturer's specifications for the addition of components to the interior cabin of the bus.
1. School administration and transportation personnel shall contact the bus manufacturer to determine the proper location and method for attachment of the oxygen container and medical support equipment.
 2. School administration and transportation personnel shall consult with a Tennessee Department of Safety School Bus Inspector who shall inspect the bus to ensure that all oxygen containers and medical support equipment are properly and securely attached.
 3. Since containers are under pressure and could accelerate a fire, all oxygen tanks (gas or liquid) shall be secured away from intense heat or friction.
 4. In cases where the oxygen is attached to a wheelchair or other medical support equipment, the tank shall be removed and secured to the bus as stated above prior to transport.
 5. Oxygen containers or other medical support equipment shall never be stored or secured in an area where the wheel chair occupant could strike against it in a crash situation.
- D. Oxygen enriches the combustibility potential when used in an enclosed area. Safeguards shall be in place to prevent any use of open flames in the interior cabin of the bus while the oxygen is onboard (e.g., a child with a cigarette lighter or matches).
- E. A decal indicating medical support equipment is in use and a placard indicating compressed oxygen on board shall be placed in a visible position on the exterior side of the bus to assist emergency personnel in the event of a crash.

For additional information, contact Sam Cameron at the Tennessee Department of Education at (423)-883-3527 or Ray Robinson at the Tennessee Department of Safety at (615) 687-2304.